



June 1987

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For the Second Sunday after Pentecost: Matthew 10:24-33 Are We His Followers?

So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge him before my Father who is in heaven . -- Matt . 10:32

Jesus has called the Twelve, and is sending them out on their first missionary journey. Before sending them out, though, he gathers them together for preparation , and gives them, in this passage of Scripture, several pieces of advice and warning.

The keystone of this advice is, "Have no fear!" Jesus tells his followers to speak the truth boldly , to proclaim from the housetops the secrets heard in the hallways. He tells the disciples not to fear , because whoever proclaims the truth, who champions the cause of Christ, will be championed by that Christ before the throne of almighty God.

We who are Christians are supposed to be supported by that faith, that hope, that love. We are to trust in the compassion of our Lord, who will guide our lives for us if we walk with him and do his work -- the work he has given us to do. It is not easy to give up one's life to another person, to give up that independence we so cherish. If one is contemplating a serious change in one's life, and seeks Christ through prayer, and guidance through a director , counselor or friend, then one can have that trust, and

feel deeply within oneself the rightness of one's actions and choices . Knowing that one is sustained by God, trusting in God, one can have the confidence of that peace and joy and love.

This feeling comes about through work; and the main work in which we are engaged is acknowledging Christ before the world: letting others know that Christ is our friend and companion, that Christ guides and counsels us in all aspects of our lives. Truly, with prayer all is possible.

There are no other guarantees in life than this: to take that step with Christ and in Christ, to trust with faith, hope and love , and to come to the joy of that acknowledgment by him before his Father in heaven .

Have you, today, acknowledged Christ before the world — or have you only said the words without believing them? Have faith in Christ, hope in God, love one another . o

Br . Luke Anthony Nowicki works as a claims approver for John Hancock . He has been stationed at Trinity Church, Stoughton MA , as acolyte director , first communion teacher , and licensed lay reader and chalice bearer . He is in the process of moving to Pennsylvania.

Some of the noblest lives have been those of invalids who have made their agonies a triumph and conquered all things with Paul's word of life: 'My strength is made perfect in weakness.'

I was recently robbed of my wallet in the city -- and the feeling of weakness and helplessness is something which can only be described by someone to whom it has happened. But the basis of our hope is our awareness of God's love for us. When we are in trouble something very wonderful happens: we realize

that as we become weaker we actually become stronger, for we are forced to find strength in our Lord.

Jesus is the door that opens to strength. He is the only way; the only escape from death to life. I rediscovered recently what all of us rediscover and already know: we have access to the Father anywhere and anytime. He calls us to go in and look upon his face and hear his words. We cannot go to him too often. o

-- RTB

Here and there with the Brotherhood... COMMUNITY NOTES

MANCHESTER NH

Br. Christian Williams is hard at work with the Brotherhood Vestment Exchange. New orders are coming in all the time, as are donations. But as always, the donations lag behind a bit. Any offers?

NEW BOSTON NH

Br. Roy Tobin spent two weekends in retreat at Hundred Acres Monastery, a Roman Catholic Benedictine community.

BOSTON MA

Br. Laurence Andrew Keller is director of the sacristy and altar guild at the Church of the Advent. He also leads Evening Prayer on a monthly basis at St. Paul's Cathedral. +++ Br. Bernard Fessenden is licensed as a lay eucharistic minister at the Church of St. John the Evangelist. +++ Br. Donovan Aidan Bowley is a frequent visitor with the members of the Society of St. John the Evangelist, Cambridge. He spent Easter in Edinburgh, Scotland, and also visited Durham, York, and Canterbury. +++ Another traveler was Postulant Ciaran Anthony Della Fera, who just returned from a business trip that took him to London, Paris, Munich, Geneva, and Zurich. He is at SS. Luke's & Margaret's, Brighton. +++ Br. Matthew Staples will be starting a volunteer work program at St. Monica's Home for Aged Women, Roxbury. The Home is

operated by the Society of St. Margaret. +++ Bishop of Massachusetts David Johnson met with Brs. Laurence Andrew, Roy, Bernard, Donovan Aidan, and Matthew, in a "get to know one another" session. The brothers were very enthusiastic about the meeting. +++ Br. Bernard hosted a farewell party for Br. Luke Anthony (see cover article). Best wishes to him as he travels to Province III!

BROOKLYN NY

Postulant Christopher Stephen Jenks has recently joined the parish of St. Ann and Holy Trinity. He is singing in the choir and will be assisting the rector in liturgical planning. He is working this summer for the Sacred Sites and Properties Fund of the N.Y. Landmarks Conservancy. This program administers grants and loans to landmark churches and synagogues in the state, for the purpose of capital improvement, renovation and repair, and provides technical assistance in these repairs. This position is an internship in partial fulfillment for a Master of Science degree in historic preservation, from Columbia University.

NEW YORK CITY

Br. Charles Kramer, who is studying at the Institute of Theology at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, preached the sermon at an Institute eucharist in February.

BRONX NY

Br . Tobias Stanislas Haller is helping out at St. James', Fordham, doing occasional liturgical duty and preaching . He led the congregation in the singing of the Great Litany on the first Sunday in Lent , sang the Passion on Palm Sunday, and presented two homilies as part of the 'three hours' on Good Friday.

MT. KISCO NY

Brs. Richard Thomas , James E. Teets and Tobias Stanislas attended the celebration of a new ministry for the Rev. Richard J . Anderson, new rector of St. Mark's. Bishop Paul Moore was preacher and celebrant .

DIOCESE OF VIRGINIA

Br. Thomas Martin Little led a quiet day for Region 14 of the diocese.

Kerygma Korner

The Misuse of Scripture -- and How to Avoid It

Scripture has often been mangled, twisted, and abused to support positions in debates on many issues. The current debate on sexual morality that is raging in the Church offers many sad examples. Here are some of the commonest misuses of Scripture, and suggested ways to counteract them. Many of these errors are honest and unintentional; others are deliberate.

The first errors involve the *text* itself.

* *Misquote and misattribute*: a constant abuse . You can't possibly interpret the Scripture if the text is corrupted by faulty memory . And check the origin: was it John the Baptist or St. Paul? or was it Isaiah? Don't trust your memory: look it up; and read, mark , and inwardly digest!

* *Translations*: Always using one translation can give you a very narrow view. All translation involves a degree of interpretation. Check different versions and, when possible, study the text in the original language.

* *Reading*: Sadly, clergy often leave regular intensive Scripture reading behind once they

ARLINGTON VA

Brs. John E. Nidecker, Edward Munro and Thomas Martin led the Stations of the Cross at St. Mary's Church.

CHICAGO

Novice Br . Edward Ramon Riley has been accepted at Loyola University, to begin the master's program in pastoral theology.

MT. CARMEL IL

Novice Br. Michael David Elvestrom's third exhibit this spring opened at Wabash Valley College. He is also working on restoration at St. John the Baptist Church, including painting and goldleafing, a new polychrome sign for the front lawn, and an icon of the parish patron. o

graduate from seminary . If your only contact with the Bible is through the lectionary, you will miss two things: 1) You will completely miss any text *not* in the lectionary . Important portions of the Old Testament will remain unread (The Song of Songs, for example). 2) You will also be reading most texts in half-chapter or smaller chunks. Besides losing the context, this destroys, for example , the sense of urgency in Mark's Gospel, and renders much of Paul's writing incomprehensible. His point-counterpoint technique of argument sometimes spreads over several chapters, and if you read in smaller sections, you can easily lose track . Look at the first eight chapters of Romans, for example . So, in addition to any liturgical reading, read through entire books, or at least read several chapters at a sitting.

The next errors involve *context* .

* *Prooftexting*: using isolated quotations which seem to support a point of view . This is a technique used by both conservatives and liberals. It is this abuse that causes people to believe "you can prove anything from Scripture." Several correctives need to be applied: examine the textual and

situational placement of a statement, and never build a case on an isolated quote.

* *Anthologizing*: This is an editorial process in which everything you don't like about the Scriptures is excised, or everything that appeals to you is gathered into a neat little packet. It's another form of proof-texting. This produces the "gentle Jesus, meek and mild" half-gospel. Just don't do it!

* *Ignoring the Old Testament and the synoptic references*: Many New Testament texts are in fact quotations from or allusions to Old Testament sources. For example, using "You always have the poor with you" (Matt. 26:11) as a defense for lack of charitable outreach ignores the fact that it is an allusion to a text in Deuteronomy (15:11) which ends, "you shall open wide your hand ... to the poor." Use a version with good cross references, and make use of concordances and harmonies of the Gospels.

* *Failing to take the spiritual / emotional context into account*: One often hears people discount a passage on the grounds of what they call "social context." They will say, "Paul was writing in a different sort of world." While this may be true, the social context is less important than the spiritual and emotional context. For example, the Pauline statements on marriage and celibacy must be seen in the context of Paul's belief in the impending *eschaton* (see 1 Cor. 7:25-40). Think of Paul as rather like a father driving home after a day's outing with his children: they're about a mile from home, and the kids start complaining that they have to go to the bathroom. What does he say? "Can't you hold it! We're almost there!" So, keep the spiritual world view in mind.

The last set of abuses are brought about by *tradition*.

* *Tunnel vision*: This happens when a tradition is so set in concrete that it is difficult to

see a given text in any other light.

Tradition is meant to illuminate, not to blind. This narrowing is especially dangerous when it is enshrined in the translations. The text is then, in effect, conditioned by the tradition, rather than the tradition being informed by a fresh look at the texts. Translations are usually done by committees, and committees are usually conservative by virtue of the need to compromise. Be open to alternative interpretations, and again, return to the original texts whenever possible.

* *Dominicalizing*: This happens when a traditional teaching or view is placed into the mouth of our Lord. It may be a teaching which is in itself sound, but the attempt to bolster its authority by attributing it to Jesus should be avoided. Watch out for statements beginning, "Our Lord taught that ..." or "Jesus said that..." when they can't be supported with citations.

* *Phantom Scripture*: This is similar to dominicalizing. A tradition is imputed to be of biblical antiquity and authority when it is in fact completely postscriptural. Much of what we think of as "traditional" is in fact rather late; much of it doesn't predate the Reformation, and some of it is pure nineteenth century! Be wary of 'The biblical tradition of ...' when it isn't supported by biblical references.

As Anglicans, we accept the Scriptures as a source of authority. But, if we are truly to embrace the Word of God as it comes to us through fallible human minds and hearts, we should make every effort to have as clear and accurate a vision of it- as possible. The final question must be, Will we be able to accept the authority of Scripture if it turns out that it doesn't say what we always thought it did? o

-- The Editor